

Table 1: Summary of estimated relative risks for current cigarette smokers, major disease categories causally related to cigarettes, males and females aged 35 years and older, CPS-I (1959-1965) and CPS-II (1982-1986), United States cohort study

<i>Underlying cause of death</i>	<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>	
	<i>CPS-I</i>	<i>CPS-II</i>	<i>CPS-I</i>	<i>CPS-II</i>
CHD, age < 35	1.83	1.94	1.4	1.78
CHD, age 35-64	2.25	2.81	1.81	3
Cerebrovascular lesions, age < 35	1.37	2.24	1.19	1.84
Cerebrovascular lesions, age 35-64	1.79	3.67	1.92	4.8
COPD	8.81	9.65	5.89	10.47
Cancer, lip, oral cavity and pharynx	6.33	27.48	1.96	5.59
Cancer, esophagus	3.62	7.6	1.96	10.25
Cancer, pancreas	2.34	2.14	1.39	2.33
Cancer, larynx	10	10.48	3.81	17.78
Cancer, lung	11.35	22.35	2.69	11.94

Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1989

Recent Chinese and Indian studies confirm many of the findings from earlier US and UK studies (Liu et al., 1998; Niu et al., 1998). Importantly, results suggest that tobacco magnifies underlying risks. Thus, tobacco causes a significant proportion of tuberculosis deaths and a higher proportion of chronic respiratory conditions and a lower proportion of heart disease than in other studies. Indian prospective studies (Gupta & Mehta, 2000) have started to report their results. Importantly, overall death rates among smokers and all tobacco users are about twice those of non-users. The pattern of tobacco use is more complex in India than in the US or UK with a very wide variety of forms of tobacco being used.

Overall, the impact of tobacco on health is one of the best documented relationships in all of public health. As studies include more women and developing countries, the strength of the evidence grows.

Environmental tobacco smoke

Second-hand smoke is a real and significant threat to public health. Supported by two decades of evidence, the scientific community now agrees that there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke.

Both smokers and nonsmokers can incur adverse health effects from the smoke of burning cigarettes. While smokers inhale mostly mainstream (MS) smoke, nonsmokers inhale mostly sidestream (SS) smoke, which is emitted into the surrounding air between puffs from the end of the smoldering cigarette. Sidestream smoke is the major source of environmental tobacco smoke (ETS).